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Linda Lapiņa & Charlotte Grum

**To cite this article:** Linda Lapiņa & Charlotte Grum (23 Apr 2024): Walking with sheep, dancing with dragonflies: moving-with multispecies ecologies, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, DOI: [10.1080/14780887.2024.2341410](https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2024.2341410)

**To link to this article:** <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2024.2341410>



Published online: 23 Apr 2024.



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# Walking with sheep, dancing with dragonflies: moving-with multispecies ecologies

Linda Lapiņa <sup>a</sup> and Charlotte Grum <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Roskilde University, Department of Communication and Arts, Roskilde, Denmark; <sup>b</sup>Roskilde University, Department of People and Technology, Roskilde, Denmark

## ABSTRACT

Based on the authors' fieldwork with sheep and dragonflies, this article explores multispecies methods as moving-with multispecies ecologies. Apart from being scholars, both authors are performance practitioners engaging with more-than-human environments. As a part of an art exhibition in 2015, Charlotte did a performative walk with a sheep for 5 weeks, intra-acting with the sheep and the other human and non-human animals inhabiting the heath, the weather conditions, the local visitors and media. Linda has been dancing by Utterslev marsh, a nature-culture area in Copenhagen, since 2020, exploring mo(ve)ments of connection with multiple bodies in the surroundings, including dragonflies. Performing multispecies research as a practice of relationality, the article takes shape as a conversation, evolving around three themes: moving-with multispecies ecologies; pace, speed/slowness and letting go; and entangled ethics and vulnerabilities. 'Moving-with' invites qualitative researchers to explore movement, speed and temporality in the entangled multispecies ecologies they become a part of.

## KEYWORDS

Arts-based methods; corporeality; entangled ethics; multi-species methods; relational ontologies; walking methodologies

Dragonfly dance

Gliding

Light-winged in the summer heat

Cutting

Through air ripe with elderflower

Floating

Over sluggish water ripe with algae

Basking

Amidst the smells, sounds, sights

Shifting

Mid-summer/ Mid-air/ Meeting kin

Catching

Wingspreads of currents

Hurling

In-between sky and its reflection

Cast

In uncountable momentary motions

Evading

Orderly shapes

Finding

Stillness amidst unpredictable trajectories

No straight line to hold onto

No accounting for parts that make up the whole

Moving

In patches, in fragments, in strokes

## Introduction

Dear reader, welcome.

You are about to read an article that, for the most part, takes the shape of a conversation between us, Charlotte and Linda. We chose to write the article as a conversation to show how we engage in relational thinking and knowledge creation- which we believe are key to working with multispecies methods and ecologies. We wish to *show* how relationality shapes our knowledge production; how 'we' as authors are co-becoming through writing this text. We are aware that the concepts used in the text might be new and unusual for someone working in psychology- and if this is the case, we hope that our exploration can be like a 'line of flight' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) inspiring further reading. We chose to preserve the open and wondering character of the conversation, as it shows the relational

nature of our knowledge creation and dissemination. Furthermore, the conversation format enables us to juxtapose our engagements with multispecies methods, highlighting how they converge and diverge. In the conversation, sub-headings indicate key aspects of our multispecies, artistic research practices: engaging with multispecies methods through moving-with multispecies ecologies; moving at a different pace, speed/slowness, and letting go; and finally, the entangled ethics and vulnerabilities of multispecies methods. In speaking to each other and in writing this article, we are accompanied by the sheep, dragonflies and the ecologies that our multispecies research unfolded in. Sometimes, we invite these ecologies to seep into the article through textual forms that might resemble poems – a movement of words upon the page. We do this to experiment with knowledge production and dissemination with regards to participatory multispecies methods (Bastian et al. 2016), asking how we might invite others into the text, not just as objects (Neimanis and Walker 2014) of knowledge production ('us' knowing something about 'them'), but as entities with their own agency, even as this agency is mediated by 'us' (Country et al. 2016).

The article is inspired by and contributes to scholarship that, rather than framing multispecies encounters as unfolding in the space between two 'species' or types of beings (usually humans/researchers and either dogs, whales, cats, plants, or fungi . . .), actively and purposefully addresses the ecologies (histories, relationships, landscapes) *around* multispecies encounters as *co-constitutive* of those very encounters (Morley 2023; Satsuka 2018; van Dooren 2019; van Dooren, Kirksey, and Münster 2016). Consequently, rather than attempting to shift the focus from humans to other species as a proposed alternative to anthropocentrism, we foreground entangled relationality as integral to moving-with multispecies ecologies. For instance, when Charlotte connects herself to a sheep called Number Two (after the sheep's ear tag), and they walk on a remaining patch of Danish heathland, they are also walking with the material effects of centuries of domestication of and co-habitation with sheep; with the changing weather; and discourses about femininity and aging. When Linda dances with dragonflies on a platform by Utterslev marsh, a nature-culture area of interconnected bogs in Copenhagen, they are also dancing with the entangled ecologies that make up the context for multispecies encounters on the platform. These include seemingly contradictory spatio-temporal logics (Valverde 2015) of nature conservation, pollution and extraction that continue to shape the marsh; exposure to changing weather (Neimanis and Walker 2014), influenced by climate change; and awareness of the transience and mortality of dragonflies and all of us, living beings.

Inspired by feminist new materialist thinking and performative artistic research, our approach offers alternatives to humanist, anthropocentric research- as- mastery predominant in the social sciences in general and some fields of psychology in particular. While the article draws on situated, specific artistic practices, it discusses skills central to ethnography and other

qualitative methods, multispecies and otherwise, such as listening, attunement, and attentiveness (Back 2007; Tsing 2017), telling new stories for multispecies futures (Haraway and Endy 2019). Furthermore, our methodological approach involves reciprocity and an openness to being changed by our environments, which will resonate with researchers who aim to practice openness, humility and vulnerability.

We propose that multispecies methods offer possibilities for cultivating response-ability while daring to ‘stay with the trouble’ (Haraway 2016) – sensing our relatedness and ethical commitments to ‘a world of wounds’, a phrase coined by the ecologist Aldo Leopold in 1949, while acknowledging our complicity in the infliction of these wounds. We are inspired by feminist new materialist emphases on relational ontology in thinking of multispecies intra-actions and entanglements (Alaimo 2010; Barad 2007; Bennett 2010; 2017), rather than inter-actions between different and distinct species or individuals. At the same time, we acknowledge that relational ontologies have been around for much longer than the emphasis on separation predominant in Western science. Indigenous cosmologies predate Western science, and thus, they also predate the attempts to dismantle dichotomies and binaries ‘from the inside’ of the Western paradigm, such as the above-mentioned feminist new materialist perspectives. This is why we also see a responsibility to refer to and include indigenous knowledges (Graugaard 2021; Kimmerer 2013; TallBear 2017; Todd 2014). In particular, we are inspired by perceiving land and more-than-human others as teachers, approaching them with humility and awareness of our limitations, while also practicing reciprocity (Country et al. 2022). Our multispecies research is thus nourished by multiple fields of scholarship, including indigenous knowledges, scholarship on embodiment and affectivity and feminist new materialisms, as well as our artistic and movement practices.

In her article, ‘Wondering the World Directly – or, How Movement Outruns the Subject’ (2014), Erin Manning describes how in ‘movement-moving’, it is not the subject or the pre-formed body doing the movement, it is the relational field itself that is moving. She even calls it body-worlding (2014, 177), a force before it is form, ‘wondering the world directly, in movement’. Linda’s dancing with dragonflies and Charlotte’s walking with sheep can be seen as different approaches to moving the relational field. Our moving-withs are at the same time enacting relational entanglement and stirring the relational field in specific ways, by our choice of moving-with.

In this sense, the dragonfly and the sheep are not the central actors nor even the most interesting agents in our explorations. Rather, together ‘we’ create new relational possibilities to think with and live by, echoing a post qualitative approach to process methodology (St Pierre 2021). We explore the methodological implications of ‘moving-with’, such as speed, temporality and movement of relational matter, less pronounced in concepts like ‘sympoesis’ (Haraway 2016). While we are inspired by Despret’s (2013) emphasis on multiplicity, openness and expansion,

the concept of ‘moving-with’ insists on the frictional messiness of body-worlding, less addressed by concepts like ‘embodied empathy’ (Despret 2013) and ‘entangled empathy’ (Gruen 2015).

Before delving into our conversation about moving-with sheep and dragonflies, we would like to introduce ourselves- the relations through which we are becoming. In doing this, we draw on feminist approaches to knowledge production that emphasize how our situatedness in the world (with relation to class, race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexuality, body shape and other locations) contribute to partial knowledges (Haraway 1988; Hinton 2014; Rich 1984). This approach is particularly fruitful for multispecies methods as they are methods ‘in the flesh’- foregrounding embodiment and the specific locations from which we relate and sense our entanglements (Haraway 2012; Petitt 2023).

Linda: I could speak of how I arrived at multispecies work through my academic trajectory. However, I would like to start by sharing a bit of my family history, since it speaks of my ways of relating to land and more-than-human entities. I was brought up in Latvia, primarily by a maternal grandmother who talked to plants and taught me to pick mushrooms. A daughter of almost illiterate, landless peasants, she moved to Riga to study at the university and became a Doctor of Sciences and a renown historian. She had these opportunities thanks to the educational and employment policies of the same Soviet state that collectivized agriculture in Latvia and undertook the deportation of my land-owning paternal grandmother and her three young children. As a migrant in Denmark, I bring these embodied memories with me: intergenerational loss and displacement, as well as longing for relatedness with land and more-than-human others.

As a researcher, I arrived at more-than-human methodological approaches through working with embodiment, affect and atmospheres in urban nature-cultures. This gradually opened my attention to how my dance and movement practice was contributing to knowledge production- as embodied listening and a mode of being attentive to my (more-than-human) research interlocutors (Lapiņa 2021, 2023). While I have no formal education as a dancer, I have been moving and dancing since I was a child and working with performance and arts-based research methods, which include poetry and audiovisual methods, since 2015. For me, arts-based methods offer ways of knowing differently that add to, for example, interviews and ethnography. They have the potential to create resonance and attunement, and to move-with those that we are researching-knowing with, including other species. Furthermore, more-than-human and arts-based methods are important in a time of entwined environmental crises- expanding notions of knowledge, challenging the duality of knowing subjects and objects of knowledge.

Charlotte: Re-visiting a 2015 art project in this paper, is a way for me to fold myself and my partner the sheep into new entanglements, new conversations, keeping my thinking-doing alive and kicking.

Originally educated as a social psychologist at University of Copenhagen, currently working at Roskilde university, I also work as an artist, creating

a hybrid position of academic-artist. In the beginning it felt like an uneven balancing act but over the years it feels more like an ongoing dialogue. The not-quite-same, not-quite-other (Trinh Minh-Ha 1986) position has produced my subject position on the rim of things, cultivating the art of boundary walking. I can also think of it as a de-centered position drifting in and out, undercutting the inside/outside opposition, allowing me to wonder about worldly mattering. My art projects thus become a sort of material philosophical inquiry into the complex and complicated relationship between human and non-human matter. Academically, I am very interested in how performative writings can add vital and vitalizing qualities to more traditional academic knowledge production and presentation (Manning 2016).

Post-psychological (Juelskjaer and Staunæs 2016), posthumanist and new materialist thinking is entrenched in my body and breathing and has been since my master's degree and even before, growing up in the Danish countryside, horseback riding on the newly harvested fields, becoming with the landscape and the animal world. Growing up with a hard-working mum and a smaller brother, the forest, the fields and my many hamsters and cats became my siblings, friends and teachers, teaching me how to be in the world. Today, I am still in an ongoing dialogue with my plant friends in my garden and Musse, my cat companion, living in an arrangement of kinship with non-human significant others (Haraway 2006).

The text that follows is based on a conversation between us that took place in August 2023, transcribed and organized into three parts. In the conversation, we jointly explored our practices of working with multispecies ecologies. The conversation and the subsequent re-turns to it comprise a relational spiral of knowledge creation, with the text circulating in between us, triggering new questions and insights.

### **Working with multispecies methods through moving-with multispecies ecologies**

C: Earlier, you made a differentiation between us saying that you enter a space where things happen around you, and you said that I have chosen a sheep. And it is so interesting because in my mind I keep thinking that what I did, walking with the sheep for 5 weeks, 5 days a week for 5 hours a day, was performing relational ontology which is not only the sheep. It was very much also the landscape, the cultural history of that specific landscape, the heath of Denmark. My walking with the sheep was a part of a group art exhibition about the noblewoman Johanne Severine Frederikke Rist who 200 hundred years ago, due to an economical misfortune in her family, moved to live on the heath in a hut she herself built (Grum 2017). So even if I do see that I connected myself to one of the beings, the sheep, and could kind of know it was there every day, my aim was actually something else. My aim was to

explore the intra-action between all the elements, in that space, thus also becoming aware of the new local stories being produced because I walked around with the sheep. So, my focus was very much on the connections of the phenomena me and the sheep became, more than focusing on the sheep alone.

L: So how did the connection with the sheep enable you to access these histories and relationships in a different way?

C: Through the histories and relationships appearing and emerging, new stories were being told. As I told you, my sheep project was a part of a group exhibition exploring Jomfru (maid/virgin) Rist, a woman having lived at and of the heath in the 1880's. A memorial stone is placed where she lived, saying 'Jomfru Rist lived here in solitude in the 1880's'. Archives, however, tell another story. She lived there with her animals, next to a public road with frequent bypassers. 7 meters was the length of her hut .7 meters was also the length of the rope connecting me and the sheep. I had designed special harnesses for us both to wear which were connected to a hook on our breast. So, due to the rope being 7 meters, at some points we could be quite far away from each other, and we met a lot of walkers and horse-back riders. Some knew that the sheep and I were there and looked for us and interacted with us, but some didn't, and they were discovering us and brought food to the sheep and myself each day ... They *did* something. . . I felt that together we made new ways of relating possible. I don't know if it makes sense?

L: I think it does.

C: The sheep and I moved with each other and with all the other human and non-human entities moving with us. The skin cancer I had a few months before moved us away from the direct sun exposure. Moving towards winter, the sun became less powerful, but nonetheless, it affected our movements. The sheep oriented herself more and more towards the best of the dying green grass. Thus, seasonality moved us.

L: It makes me think about when you ask me about dancing, sensing and the kind of practice that it is, it is also shaped by my biography and by me being a visitor in Denmark, on Danish soil, and being a visitor by Utterslev marsh. Even though I have been going there for a few years and I have spent a lot of time on this platform ... Dancing is for me a part of listening to my



surroundings and sending small greetings to the beings that I see. It could be the sky; it could be the weather. And these greetings physically take a different shape depending on who I am interacting with in that moment.

But then there is also an element of trying to hold on to something, which comes from me feeling like a stranger. It comes from trying to figure out, what is this place, what are these particular entanglements of so-called human and so-called nature that don't quite make sense to me, don't make sense to my senses, having grown up in post-Soviet Latvia. The welfare society, the history that made this space, people being paid in the 1930's to work here, to make all these paths. And then there are the algae in the water and pollutants from agriculture, and these things are very felt in the summer months. Today it was very clean, the water was clean because it has been raining so much, but usually in the summer it really smells and there is a lot of algae . . . My body doesn't recognize this ecology, but it recognizes the dragonflies, it recognizes particular elements in that ecology, so it's also a way for me to try to orient myself and a way to try to establish some recognition and resonance.

You also asked how dance evolved for me. For me, dance tends to happen in situations where direct touch is not possible, and in situations where touch is possible but not appropriate. It's a way of mimicking touch, or mimicking holding something, being held by something. Dance is also a form of touch, a delicate touch. There is a comforting element to it, and a recognition. I think it is this recognition that I am longing for, or a resonance I am longing for. Hmm.

So, the dragonfly is a being I recognize from being a child, or I feel I do. It might be a different kind of dragonfly. There might be tiny differences I don't perceive, but there is that instant comfort of recognition.

C: Maybe the term differentiation is good. And maybe that's why I resist my arrangement with the sheep being minimized to something between the sheep and I. Because all the time, I saw us as participating in a bigger arrangement of natural- cultural elements and mixes, and that is what I keep on referring to the term relational ontology. Maybe I failed in communicating to the public that that was my actual interest. On the other hand, when my art project was re-presented by the local press, as I told you, it did become a reductionist version: 'the old woman walking with an old sheep' and 'why choose a sheep, it's a stupid animal'. A story like that was being produced. And I realize that that is *also* interesting, how, when we dive into matter and *do* something, place ourselves, locate or situate ourselves in unusual spaces, we produce effects.

L: When you spoke earlier, that's also continuing this new materialist lens, I thought about intra-action from Barad (2007) and also about Alaimo's (2010) writing about transcorporeality, of becoming a body in relationship

to other bodies, that are also historicized bodies. The body of the sheep is not the individual sheep only, it is also a body that has been domesticated, that has had this co-existence, different kinds of, but also subdued and violent relationships with human bodies for many, many, many years. And it is a body that has been changed by those relationships. A 70 kilos heavy sheep has a different anatomy than wild sheep once had or continue to have. I was also curious when you spoke about the ecology of meanings that your being with the sheep was read into, and I was wondering, yes, there is a memorial stone about this woman who lived with animals – how was she perceived in her own time? There is a kind of both discursive and material and relational ecology that you are moving in.

C: Exactly. And I actually dived into the old maps of her time of the landscape, and it was so interesting that it was barely visible in the landscape, the memorial stone was put just where she lived in her small hut, but on the old maps, you can see that it was actually a bigger gravel road that passed her house. So, her house, now being on the outskirts of everything, was actually very central to movements at that time. It inspired me to revisit the place and re-write her story in a way. Or brought forth a story that hasn't been told about her existence. Or even my existence. I have always dreamt of being a shepherd, in Norway. You asked me, why a sheep? Somehow, this longing for living with sheep has become a part of me.

L: What changed during this time? I am thinking there could be so many ways to think about that, what changed for you or in you, or changed in how you could access that landscape, those histories or relationships?

C: Walking, dealing with each other, did something to me. And dealing with the stories that started to be told around us did something to me. On one hand I had a feeling of emerging relationality between the sheep and I and our experiences of caring, appreciative encounters with other people and on the other hand, there were critical media stories going on. What I realize now is that what emerged, was a feeling of vulnerability – which was also being produced by the lack of understanding in some of the media stories being told. So, there was a feeling of vulnerability entwined with our bodies getting worn out together. My cancer prone skin was exposed to sunlight, my asthma lungs suffered from the cold and the sheep started limping, not being used to moving around this much, as her ordinary life was being spent in a small paddock. I learned about life and mortality through the duration of the other and the moving-towards the other's and my own death. I was continuously

thinking about how being in the sun was really bad for my skin, while it also gave me a feeling of having vulnerable flesh in common with the sheep. So going from me exploring the sheep as a co-being in a more general manner, I think I became more knowledgeable about the fact that we were both older beings. Older as in, I am kind of middle-aged, and so was the sheep, and we were of the female kind, which also did something. The vulnerability came with a feeling of solidarity. That's what I think I learned in the process.

### **Moving at a different pace: speed, slowness and letting go**

L: . . . And then there is also this strangeness, the dragonflies being so fast. I took so many photos, but I can't capture them. . . but I can interact with them when they pass by me, though I can't match their speed. Even physicists write about how their movement is not predictable, and I can't predict it, so there is this limitation also, which is important for me in dance as a form of relating and knowledge creation. That it's also a dance with the inability to be with the other on the other's terms. I have to do it on the terms of my body.

So, it is this liminal space  
between  
not being able to be with the other while also trying to,  
or also being with the other,  
but constantly falling short  
remaining apart  
because  
our movements are so different  
and their movements are so fast  
and at the same time, we *are* moving together.

C: It is really, really interesting that "your" . . . animal is a fast dragonfly with a speediness, a speedy being, and mine was a sheep, even an old sheep, and a big sheep, it was 70 kilos so, it was the same weight as me, so I was thinking . . . how that has made a difference in our becomings-with, that I moved at a slow pace, and it sounds like you are interacting with speediness. And I don't recall that I felt any sense of speed with the sheep, except from when we were heading home. It was another slower movement through the landscape, slowing my human movement down, also down to almost stopping. The sheep wanted to eat some grass and then we took a step, and then it wanted to eat some grass so there was this dance between the sheep and

I where I really felt it was a negotiation. So, I was actually the speediest energy in our collaboration. That is interesting.

L: Yeah, what is also interesting for me is that you were connected, and you walked together, while I stay on this platform. The dragonflies pass me by and for that moment in time when they are blessing me with their presence, I can move with them and I can be fast, but I still stay on the platform, so my fastness is limited to parts of my body moving.

For me, and that is very important, dance is not about moving from A to B, it's not about getting somewhere. So much movement in my life, and not just actual physical movement but many ways of being in the world, in our world, are guided by having to get somewhere. Dance can get me somewhere but it's not about that. It's about being on the platform and then the dragonflies come, and they are there for a short time, I cannot predict for how long, and then they leave again, and then they might come again. So, I'm also at the mercy of them showing up. I'm not in control. It teaches me about the land, about the changing seasons (Country et al. 2016; Kimmerer 2013). There are also these in-between times when I have other beings to move with but where I am also on stand-by, waiting for the dragonflies and wondering, will another one show up. And as the summer ends, one of them will be the last for this year, without me knowing in advance. So, it's a mixture, I think, of different ways of being in time which are not only about speed and slowness but also about repetition, stand-by, dis-appearance, and like you also said, about waiting time, feeding time.

C: And also, maybe we are cultivating response-ability (Haraway 2008)? Being able to respond, maybe over time you actually become more able to respond to the dragonflies.

L: I think also, and that might be a part of response-ability, part of what I feel I'm cultivating is letting go. The ability to not become attached, knowing that they will only be there for a short period of time. It's not up to me to control. If I wanted to rely on spending a set amount of time with other beings, then I would have chosen another kind of being because with dragonflies, I just can't chase them. So, it becomes a condition for our being together that I also have to let them go.

Eve Sedgwick (2003) writes about the art of loosing. . . She spells it "loosing", when she writes about how life, love and ideas can sit on the palm of the open hand, and they can also fly off and become something else. That has preoccupied me a lot in research in recent years, how there is this idea that I get to

know something or someone, or I get data or whatever, and I *get* this thing that I hold on to and then I can go somewhere and it's mine and I can process it – but this work with the dragonflies is all about something running through my fingers. It's very interesting for me. And I think it's very interesting for me exactly because sometimes one might think of response-ability as staying with the trouble, as staying in a situation that is difficult, which I think is one way to think of that. And another is staying even though the other ones are leaving and also being with what can feel like loss, what can feel like instability, insecurity, disappointment.

C: I am thinking what if we swap 'response' with something better . . . or if we could stretch *response-ability* to become a softer, more resonating quality, because maybe it lies in 'response', that we expect we should act or we should do something but maybe the importance is also to stay awake or alert, or waiting to capture whatever, or not to capture, to meet, to be ready to encounter.

L: For me, encounter is something very interesting to think about, for example, with birds on the platform, I feel they notice me because they change their behaviour when I arrive, and they might keep their distance. With the dragonflies I know that their being there matters to me, and I react to them, but I am actually not sure if they react to me or . . . Like, does this even count as an encounter? It somehow became something I was obsessing about, that maybe they are not even noticing me, but then I thought, ha, why do I need to feel that kind of reciprocity, why do I need to be noticed? I have also been very interested in thinking about research, multispecies and otherwise, as invading someone's space. Why would it concern me if they don't notice me? But I felt like, is that even an encounter? I have had that question for myself.

C: For my part, I very much feel and visualize what we move through and with, as matter, I guess it is a very new materialist thinking, and when I imagine your body on the platform, I am thinking that there are so many meetings and differentiations. The birds might usually sit where you are dancing.

L: Yes, exactly, there was one this morning and I was thinking about how, even though I say I care and all that, I still approach, and it means that the bird has to leave. And I still want to be there. I still want to take the space from the bird.

C: Exactly.

I mean your bird not being able to land on the place where you are dancing, in another scale resonates with my sheep being taken out of or at least diverted into other ways of being and moving which wasn't necessarily good or preferred by it. So, I think it might also be important at some point to talk about ethics with regard to multispecies methodology ...

### **Entangled ethics and vulnerabilities of multispecies methods**

C: ... I remember talking to a colleague from an architecture school at a conference earlier this year, and she said: 'there is so much about this human-animal interaction going on, also in the arts, but I really think we should just leave them be. Just leave them, don't touch them, don't even interact with them.' It really inspired me, and provoked me. There are so many things I don't know about what my performance with the sheep was contributing to. However, I did evoke care from the locals. When they went for their daily walks, they met us, the next day they returned and they fed us. They gave me buns to eat and they gave the sheep carrots, and they just took care of us, in the same way that I think the woman two hundred years ago has been taken care of by locals. Being vulnerable bodies in space produces care. But I don't think it comes without also discussing the ethical issues. In some way, I was totally violating the sheep's normal life. As our walking activities were part of an art exhibition inspired by the memorial stone, each day I convinced the sheep to move one kilometre away from its friend, sheep Number Three, the distance between the farm and the heath. And let's say, even if I hadn't taken it out of its paddock but had sat, maybe a little more like you remaining on the platform, in the paddock with the two sheep, maybe that would have been another kind of becoming-with?

L: I think so. . . But I would also like to challenge this idea that we can leave the other alone. Because I think, especially with sheep, we have been entangled through these histories of hundreds of years, and does it mean that if you let it stay in its paddock, you are leaving it alone? And the dragonflies are inhabiting a very urban ecology where there is noise, traffic and pollution ...

C: Yes, good point, it's so messy.

L: It's also very egocentric to me to think, okay, me coming to this platform, being there an hour, even if it is every day, even if there are some birds who really like to hang out there, that that's the major disturbance in the birds' life. Ahhh. I mean, it doesn't mean that I should do whatever, but it is also very

self-centred to think that I am this major agent . . . Again, I really like your point about vulnerability because I think of myself when I do this kind of work, that yes, I am intervening, but I am also being intervened upon. My body is also exposed to the weather on the platform.

You spoke about how what we do moves the surroundings and how it matters. For me, there are encounters with people where we briefly talk. I thought I would disturb them, these bird-watching people or people who go to the platform a little bit in the morning with their dog. For me, dancing in public space is quite political. Something I want to do because it's another . . . let's say someone is there drinking a beer or someone is there stretching their body, or someone is there with their dog – all of this is kind of accepted. I like the idea that what I am doing is somewhat expanding the access to different bodily activities in that space. And you also had the point about vulnerability, I'm very curious what will happen in some years when I am older, because right now I haven't felt . . . There is this particular dynamic with women but of course also with other genders, but where ageing can make something appear weirder, at least in that urban setting. I imagine that it maybe wouldn't feel as comfortable for me to dance or to crawl on the ground when I am 57, compared to now, when I am 37, but because I appear younger, I can more freely do these things. But I am not sure if it's true. I'm just always wondering about age and abled-bodiness and how that factors in.

C: Thank you for saying that, because it makes me reflect on the power of my project. I think it was interesting, that the story told in some newspapers was "there is a strange woman with a stupid animal walking around" without directly evoking age but still it mattered. My arrangement with the sheep brought forth these entanglements of gender, age, bodily ability, valorisation of species etc.,

L: Yeah, it's like an interspecies entanglement that triggers this othering that is both directed towards sheep and women.

C: And it was maybe even intensifying it because it was kind of double trouble. A female human and a female stupid animal were really intensifying the . . .

L: Stigma?

C: Yeah, kind of, yeah. Or the categories being used, in a way, very belittling.

L: And to bring it back to multispecies methods, I wonder how that might matter when thinking about multispecies methods in a more general way? Because I am sure it does.

C: I think what it gives access to, what it can produce, is to bring forth all the tiny and major discursive and social, material forces that work through our bodies, *every* day, which is not necessarily seen or recognized, at least not by some bodies. And I liked what you said about it being political, because I *did* feel it was a political project as well.

L: Yes, and I think also questions which animals are even seen as worthy . . .

C: Yeah, which matters?

L: . . . Or interesting or important to engage with.

C: Exactly. I was also asked why not a . . . I can't even remember which animal but, why not a this or that instead. Why not a *proud* animal. So, coming back to a point about multispecies methodology that I can take from my experience- it's not about the species in the relationship, it's what it produces around you . . . It ripples through social matter in a very interesting way, it's situated, you can explore it, document it in different ways. It is not the relationship as an entity that is the most interesting part, it's the rippling effects around it that can teach us a lot about what is going on.

### **Breathing out. Rippling and multiplying**

After the conversation, we have continued our relational fieldwork into our writing process, attuning and listening to the multispecies ecologies we remain entangled in. Through moving-with multispecies ecologies, we create new relational possibilities to think with and live by. And through producing this article, these ecologies produced the tentative 'we' dancing in this text.

We would like the ending of the article to feel like blowing the seeds of a dandelion into the wind (see [Figure 1](#)), or the arts of loosing, where 'life, loves, and ideas might then sit freely, for a while, on the palm of the open hand' (Sedgwick 2003, 3). Then, the knowledges created in our collaboration could





**Figure 1.** . . . like blowing the seeds of a dandelion into the wind.

travel and resonate, creating effects that nourish the readers' multispecies practices with the curiosity and openness that we sought to cultivate when encountering the sheep, dragonfly and each other.

The key contribution of the article is elaborating our practice of moving-with multispecies ecologies, with focus on movement, speed and temporality. We bring insights from eco-somatic arts, feminist new materialisms and indigenous knowledges into multispecies research in psychology. Approaching multispecies research as moving-with multispecies ecologies emphasizes how encounters with more-than-human research participants unfold in and illuminate broader historical, ecological relational and discursive entanglements. For instance, when dancing on the platform by the marsh, Linda engages not only with the dragonflies, but also with multiple other lifeforms around her, as well as temporalities and histories of extraction, pollution and management of urban 'nature'. Dance is a way of intra-acting (Barad 2007) that renders these relationships and temporalities sense-able, makes them matter. When Charlotte and the sheep are walking the heath of Jutland, they create ripples in the social-material mattering, producing effects; and they are also mattered in specific ways, thus giving us an insight into multispecies relations as worlding relationality. In the section on moving-with at a different pace, we address questions of letting go, reciprocity and participation in our moving-with sheep and dragonflies. We

share approaches to multispecies methods where the researcher is not necessarily in control or deciding the pace of movement, practicing an alternative to an idea(l) of research as mastery. Finally, we discuss entangled ethics and our different but shared vulnerabilities across species. In this section, we explore how entangled ethics might materialize in already disturbed, wounded ecologies, where not-intruding might not be a choice.

A recurring question in our conversations while working on the article has been that of centre versus margin in knowledge production. Returning to our conversation, we spoke about how Jomfru Rist from the heath where Charlotte walked with the sheep, often commemorated as a peripheral, eccentric and isolated old maid ‘living alone’, was living with her animals by a road, in the middle of things. Her image as a peripheral figure reflects subsequent discourses on femininity, ageing, reproduction and species hierarchies. This made us think about how indigenous knowledges that emphasize connectedness and co-dependence and might be seen as marginal from a Western viewpoint, also predate Western worldviews and might be central to our shared survival (Whyte 2017) – knowledges which some of us are in the process of re-membling and others never forgot (Escobar 2016; Todd 2018). Inspired by these knowledge traditions, as well as feminist new materialisms, post-human and more-than-human”turns”, we propose that multispecies methodologies that de-centre and re-imagine “the human” can contribute towards enacting a more just world, where we as researchers move and dance response-ably with and among other beings.

### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

### Notes on contributors

*Linda Lapiņa* I work as Associate professor of Cultural Encounters and Global Humanities at Roskilde University in Denmark. I am also a dancer and a psychologist, and sometimes a performer. My work is based in intersectional feminism, paying attention to power, inequalities and differences. In recent years, I have engaged with more-than-human and indigenous knowledges. My research interests include difference in changing urban spaces; differentiated whiteness; urban nature-cultures; intergenerational and more-than human memory; ecological grief; and food. I work with sensory- and autoethnography, memory work and arts-based methods, aiming to integrate personal, collective and ecological modes of feeling and knowing. At the university, I strive to open more spaces for collaboration, regeneration and nourishment.

*Charlotte Grum* I work as a Teaching Associate Professor of Social psychology and Learning at the Department of People and Technology at Roskilde University in Denmark. I am also an artist, producing site-specific performative installations in public space. Please see [www.charlottegrum.dk](http://www.charlottegrum.dk). My work is based in new materialist, posthumanist and postqualitative

thinking. My research interests include cultivating learning communities, queering knowledge production and exploring with students the intersections of social psychology and environmental humanities.

## ORCID

Linda Lapiņa  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3562-6949>

Charlotte Grum  <http://orcid.org/0009-0001-9136-6926>

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